



March 21, 1997

The Honorable Trent Lott
Senate Majority Leader
The United States Senate
SR-487 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-3210

Dear Senator Lott:

The Executive Committee of the Board of Governors of the New York Academy of Sciences expresses its unanimous support for ratification by the U.S. Senate of the Chemical Weapons Convention prior to the treaty becoming international law on April 29, 1997.

The mission of the Academy supports the independent debate of controversial issues and aims to bring the best of science and technology to serve national and international goals. We affirm that mission by urging you to use your good offices to advance the debate about this decision in the full Senate.

During the past fifteen years, and over several administrations, The United States was a leader in the work to establish these international accords by which the actions of compliant and non-compliant countries may be held to account. We recognize that no disarmament agreement can possess a perfect regime for verification; but this one does have strong provisions for monitoring. Moreover, the treaty surely will reinforce and raise the world's commitment to avoid all uses of chemical arms. Failure to ratify the treaty would seriously jeopardize the U.S. leadership in reducing chemical arms, leaving the U.S. outside the emerging global consensus and with little subsequent voice in international enforcement policies or actions. At the same time, the U.S. Congress has unilaterally removed these weapons and we face a heavy bill for their safe disposal.

Our committee adds its collective voice to those of many others who have decided, after weighing the arguments, to support ratification.

Sincerely,

Martin L. Leibowitz, Ph.D.
Chairman of the Board

Rodney W. Nichols
President and CEO

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